

# ‘Remembering the Kiwis in wartime Singapore.’

[Briefing notes for the information of New Zealand High Commission, Singapore]

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## **Why were New Zealanders in Malaya and Singapore during the Pre-War Years?**

It is not well known that, ever since the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, New Zealanders have been a key part of the ‘Expat’ community in Singapore and Malaysia (‘expat’ of course is a word that only appeared in Singapore after the end of the Second World War - in fact it appears around 1948) in what, prior to the War, comprised the whole Malayan peninsula. These countries were formally described as the Federated Malay States (FMS) and the Straits Settlements (Singapore, Malacca and Penang being the more important Settlements), together with another five ‘Unfederated Malay States’

Initially it was men during the late 1800s with degrees from the Otago School of Mines who had qualified as Mining Engineers, and qualified Land Surveyors in search of their fortunes, but there soon followed a steady stream of adventurous young men from New Zealand with different skills who boarded ships bound for an exciting life in ‘the jungles of Malaya’ where new reserves of tin ore had been found.

Newly qualified Land Surveyors like Charles Alma Baker from Dunedin in the 1890s would go on to amass a huge fortune of literally millions of dollars from surveying virgin jungle for the colonial government, then venturing into rubber plantations and tin mines – and such was his success that by the advent of WWII he was personally buying and donating ‘Spitfire’ fighter planes from his own resources to the RAF. Others like John Robert Dewar from Alexandra, Otago made their mark via the more predictable route of FMS government bureaucracy to become the Director of Surveying.

These early arrivals were followed during the 1920s and 1930s by a multitude of New Zealanders who offered skills from Mining and Surveying to Medicine, Accounting and horse racing.

Depression years had also prompted men of all ages from Britain, Europe and the Colonies to try their luck in ‘Malaya’ – working age European men were ‘thick on the ground’.

With the commencement of WWII hostilities in Europe a ‘Compulsory Service (Volunteer Force) Ordinance 1940’ was passed in the then ‘Colony’ (the FMS and the Straits Settlements) which required every ‘British Subject’ between the age of 18 years and 55 years to be called up for service in the ‘Volunteer Forces’. This involved training camps in weekends and at other times for up to two months a year. Men in roles considered essential for the war effort (tin miners, rubber planters, doctors, engineers, Police etc) were able to apply for exemption but this was strictly assessed and decided by a public tribunal.

The result is that, during 1940-41, most eligible New Zealand men ( 74 men from our research) in Singapore and Malaya were recruited along with larger groups of British, Australians (in fact most men from Allied European countries) into the army, navy, air force or engineering branches of the ‘Federated Malay States Volunteer Forces’ or the ‘Straits Settlement Volunteer Forces’ (**see Appendix One for the List of New Zealanders in the Malayan Volunteer Forces**). These men were not allowed to leave Malaya or Singapore without a formal government exit permit – a few did to enlist in the RAF and British Army.

## **RNZNVR and the Royal New Zealand Navy personnel in Singapore.**

New Zealand had no formal naval representation in Singapore (which had just completed a famously huge, incredibly expensive Royal Navy base prior to the outbreak of War) but in April 1940, with the Royal Navy in Britain becoming short of personnel to man its vessels, the NZ government organised a large naval 'draft' of personnel to be sent from New Zealand to join the Royal Navy in Britain 'for the duration'. It included 250 officers and men of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, junior Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve ratings and 130 'technical' ratings and 'Imperial' ratings who had been earlier assigned to the Royal New Zealand Navy. In addition, were ten men selected as one of the 'Yachtsman Drafts' ('Yachtsmen Scheme'/ Scheme Y) – men who had a lot of blue water sailing experience in New Zealand and offshore who were commissioned as Sub-Lieutenants.

Amongst these 'Yachtie' officers were Colin Macmillan (Katikati), Hugh Herd (Wellington), 'Johnny' Bull (Auckland), Anthony Clarke (Wellington), Edgar Derbridge (Havelock, Marlborough), 'Bob' Arkley (Wellington), Eric 'Stephen' Gerard (Christchurch), Geoffrey Studholme (Christchurch/Wairarapa), Basil Shaw (Napier), Arthur J. Martin (New Plymouth), 'Jack' Maddever, Geoff Inns, and T.E. 'Bill' Mellor (Wellington) who, along with others, would serve with distinction - many losing their lives in action and the others becoming POWs – mainly during the final disastrous evacuation of Singapore in February 1942.

In addition to these officers – some of whom were soon identified by the Royal Navy as very capable sea farers and 'skippers', but not of the required mindset towards authority to adapt to the rigour of Royal Naval discipline and perhaps the hierarchical culture in larger vessels like destroyers, cruisers and battleships – were naval ratings from the RNZNVR.

These men would also serve with great bravery and distinction – sadly their fate was often unknown to Naval HQ in New Zealand (because of the chaos, destruction of records and communication failures with the outside world once the Japanese landed on Singapore Island) and several would also lose their lives, with others becoming POWs.

After the Japanese invaded Malaya, a large group of these 'colonial officers', ratings and 'British crews' were sent from Britain to Singapore on the 'MV Aorangi' in January 1942 to join other RNZNVR officers and men who had arrived in small groups. Their objective was to command and crew the many 'requisitioned auxiliary vessels and newly built patrol boats (of 70 – 130 feet length) being organised by the Royal Navy in Singapore – particularly the 'HMML' Fairmile patrol vessels of the Singapore Flotilla.

**See Appendix Two for the names and many little known, but often most impressive, heroic exploits of men of the RNZNVR and RNZN in that theatre of war against the Japanese during January and February 1942.**

During December 1941-January 1942 men of the RNZNVR together with a few ratings from the Royal New Zealand Navy (who had been left in Singapore as superfluous to the needs of their warships or had been left in Singapore to recuperate) conducted coastal patrols and the 'extraction' of retreating Allied troops from the coastal river inlets and mangrove swamp estuaries on the Malayan Peninsula.

## **Invasion of Malaya and Singapore.**

The invasion of Malaya and Singapore, from the time of the first landings in Northern Malaya on 8 December 1941, was swift and brutal. Within eight weeks the Japanese had taken Malaya and landed on the island of Singapore, which had become intensely overcrowded during December 1941 to January 1942 by tens of thousands of fleeing civilians of all races from Malaya - plus almost 100,000 servicemen.

The New Zealand Army was not present in Malaya or Singapore although during those weeks of battles of December to February 1942 – as explained above – many New Zealanders served in the Battalions of the

FMSVF and the SSVF (some being attached to regular British Army regiments as 'guides' and interpreters because of their years of local experience). Those 'Malayan Volunteer' units generally acted as reserve troops to the regular British, Indian and AIF forces. There were also New Zealanders amongst the Australian Army forces and the Indian Army.

Several New Zealanders were killed during the 'Battle for Malaya'.

- **Sub Lt. Charles Clifford Haines, RNZNVR** (Christchurch) – Missing Presumed Killed 'during operations' on the launch 'Sylvia' near Malaya on 25.1.42. presumably during the insertion or extraction of Allied troops into the rivers and beaches of coastal Malaya during the battle for that peninsula
- **Sapper Allan Proctor, Johore Volunteer Engineers** (Dannevirke) – mortally wounded during the battle of Muar (in Malaya) on or about 15 -17 2.42, he died of his wounds in hospital in Singapore on 19.1.42. It is not clear where he was buried in 1942 but in 1950 there was a Kranji Cemetery record that he was "Buried near this Spot" in Kranji and in 1957 this was upgraded to a record on 'Special Memorial 'E' that he is buried in Plot 20, Row E, Grave 8.
- **Lt. Richard Ernest Scales, SSRNVR [pre-war he had been a rating, #07115, in the Otago RNVR]** (Dunedin) – in December 1941 he was serving as Explosives Officer on 'HMS Banka' near the Tioman islands off the east coast of Malaya when the ship struck a mine laid by a Japanese submarine, probably on 7/8.12.41. The date of the explosion and sinking is thought to have occurred somewhere between 7.12.41 – 10.12.41; official records state that Richard Scales, three other Officers and 40 of the 46 Malay ratings on board were Killed in Action in that explosion and sinking on 10.12.41.[Sadly that wreck and the remains of the victims have been totally pillaged and destroyed by scrap metal scavengers during the past decade].

At least one New Zealander was killed in the defence of Singapore.

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Graham D'Arcy Haggitt, SSVF attached to the Malay Regiment** (Nelson) – an Assistant Rubber Planter from Johore killed in the ferocious hand to hand fighting on the ridge above Pasir Panjang, whilst attached to the Malay Regiment, on 13.2.42.

### **RNZAF in Singapore**

The exploits and valour of RNZAF squadrons have not been covered in this paper because the researcher understands that the New Zealand High Commission has previously received sufficient information on the RNZAF in Malaya and Singapore for ANZAC commemorations.

### **Evacuation of Singapore**

By the second week of February 1942 the Japanese army had reached the Johore Strait and was advancing across Singapore Island.

A belated and chaotic evacuation was attempted by thousands of civilian residents who had remained because of feelings of duty and loyalty – compounded by a deluge of government propaganda assuring people that "... Fortress Singapore would never fall ...". These were mainly Europeans, Eurasians, Indians, and a small number of influential Chinese. They all had to produce the money for the ticket on a ship in many cases and then get through the strict still blocking the gates to the wharves and evacuation vessels off Clifford Pier. In the case of the Chinese, they knew they would be harshly treated by the Japanese because, since the mid-1930s, they had been donating generously to the Chinese Nationalist side in the war China was waging against the invading Japanese since.

The 'Harbour' was then the area of sea sheltering behind a large breakwater in front of what is still Clifford Pier, but now largely reclaimed land and comprising the Marina Bay area and the edge of what is today's CBD.

Literally any sea - going vessel of any size remaining in Singapore Harbour was enlisted by the authorities to evacuate people, from what had become an environment of almost constant bombing and machine gunning by Japanese planes. Singapore itself was ablaze, columns of black smoke rose thousands of feet in the air from the burning oil tanks and the streets were littered with thousands of dead and dying.

People desperately clamoured for departure 'exit' passes from the colonial government authorities (men under 40 years of age had been banned from leaving the Island for months and women had not been publicly encouraged to leave because it would '... adversely affect morale ...!') as they wished to board any ship leaving the Island. By 11 January 1942 even the rather hidebound men in authority saw the absurdity of their bureaucratic incompetence, which had seen ships leaving only half full of passengers, and more passes were issued for civilian men and women to leave, so finally some real urgency entered the situation.

About 50 ships of all sizes - from the quite large, refrigerated cargo ship "SS. Empire Star" (525 feet and 12,656 tons) through a range of mid-sized merchant vessels down to some small craft like the "SS. Tandjong Pinang" (which at 97 feet only just qualified in the definition for a 'ship') – were assembled to leave as a convoy during the 48-hour period of 11 – 13 February 1942. There were, in addition, many Naval and RAF patrol boats/launches of varying sizes identified as evacuation vessels, plus another 50 or so civilian launches, yachts, junks, and coastal craft.

The Royal Navy, Royal Australian Navy and Malayan Royal Naval Reserve ships and patrol boats , apart from a couple of destroyers which briefly escorted the bigger merchant ships like the 'SS Empire Star' and 'SS Gorgon' after leaving Singapore, included a huge variety of auxiliary vessels (i.e., merchant ships which had been requisitioned for war service ) patrol boats, auxiliary minesweepers, ex-Yangtze River gunboats and ex Yangtze River passenger ships, and RAF fast launches.

This large collection of British owned vessels which had been servicing trade and passengers on the Yangtze River in China had escaped south to Singapore in 1940-41 as the Japanese invasion of China became increasingly entrenched and widespread. This 'China Flotilla' comprised a mix of passenger vessels, flat bottomed Royal Navy gunboats designed for operating on the relatively shallow areas of the Yangtze, plus passenger vessels and work tugs (also custom designed for moving barges up and down the shallows of the river) which had been transferred to Singapore and / or requisitioned by the Royal Navy for use as Auxiliary Minesweepers and patrol boats around Singapore and Malaya. Vessels such as 'HMS Li Wo', HMS Grasshopper', 'HMS Scorpion', 'HMS Dragonfly', and 'HMT Ying Ping' would eventually all come to grief under the bombsights and gunsights of Japanese bombers and warships during their evacuation voyage from Singapore.

This period of history is very poorly recorded – but from research we are gradually learning that, of the at least 100 assorted 'vessels' (from launches, junks, and small yachts upwards to ocean going ships) leaving during that 'last window of opportunity' ( as many so thought) only a small number (perhaps twenty) would make it to safety on the east coast rivers of Sumatra or to the port of Tanjung Priok at Batavia in Java. The other 80 vessels would be sunk, run aground, or captured at sea by the powerful Japanese flotilla heading to southern Sumatra. Several thousand of their passengers and crew would be killed or taken prisoner to face three and a half years of extremely harsh, malnourished and medically deprived treatment in Internment or POW camps in Sumatra and elsewhere. Many of these servicemen and civilian women, children and men ('Expats') would die during the remainder of the War in these cruel camps.

The link to the stories and **researched** passenger and crew lists of many of the ill-fated evacuation vessels mentioned in this document is available on the 'Malayan Volunteers Group 'website under 'Singapore Evacuation Ships' – the link is <https://www.malayanvolunteersgroup.org.uk/singapore-evacuation-ships.html>

None of the ships or vessels had 'passenger lists' because of the chaos which accompanied the boarding process, so hundreds of 'expats' and servicemen ( who had been selected for evacuation at the last minute so that their particular technical skills could be used elsewhere in the war) - out of the thousands evacuated - were lost without record as the many vessels were sunk or captured.

This was the period of heaviest loss of life amongst RNZNVR, RNZN, New Zealand men serving in the 'Malayan Volunteers', and NZ civilians- at least 43 New Zealanders were killed during this evacuation (there may have been more because research is ongoing). The following is a list names of New Zealanders (and where known, where they were from in NZ) who lost their lives in the evacuation or escaping from Singapore in the weeks before and after the Surrender to the Japanese on 15.2.42.

- **Stoker Petty Officer Arthur James Bale (also known as Arthur James Powell), # 780, RNZN** (Auckland) – died on 31.3.42 of Malaria and/or Beriberi, whilst stranded for weeks after beaching of RN Fairmile patrol boat 'HMML310' on uninhabited Pulau Tjebia (near Banka Island) during the evacuation of Singapore. His remains were later reinterred in Collective Grave 31, D 1 – 17 at Kranji War Cemetery.
- **Ordinary Seaman Wilfred Bridge, #2870, RNZN** (Wellington) – 18 years of age, 'Missing Presumed Killed' on an unknown evacuation vessel 16.2.42.
- **Ordinary Seaman (Radar) Joseph James Albert Bootsma, #2632, RNZN** (Auckland City) aged 21 years of age, died in sinking of 'HMS Anking' on 4.3.42 after it had left Tanjong Priok (Batavia) when it was attacked by a powerful Japanese taskforce whilst trying to reach Australia. It is unclear whether Joseph was a member of the crew or part of a large party of naval evacuees from Singapore or Java.
- **Private John 'Jack' William Clark, Selangor Btn, FMSVF** (Port Chalmers, Dunedin) – 19 years of age, after the retreat south to Singapore was serving on one of the machine gun posts on Blakan Mati (now Sentosa), but he escaped from Sentosa by small boat the day after the Surrender. It appears from research during the war in Changi and in the decades since that Jack Clark was killed by the Japanese as a POW on the beach at Tanjong Pinang on Pulau Bintan near Singapore along with 55 Allied (British, Australian) soldiers who were also executed in the town of Tanjong Pinang as POWs by the Japanese between 20.2.42 and 27.2.42 (the remains of most of those other Allied soldiers lie in specifically numbered, but individually unidentified, graves at Kranji War Cemetery).
- **Lt. Anthony 'Tony' Ruthven Clarke, RNZNVR** (Wellington) – a well-known 'blue water' sailor recruited under the 'Yachtsman's Scheme' he evacuated on some unknown vessel(s) – possibly "Hung Jao' and 'HMS Dragonfly' (which was sunk at Pulau Posik) - from Singapore and died after escaping from Muntok POW camp on Banka Island 28.2.42, where he had been captured. His body was never found.
- **Lt. Edgar Neil Derbridge, #29363, RNZNVR** (Havelock, Marlborough) – served on evacuation vessel 'HMS Li Wo' which was attacked, and in turn attacked, Japanese warships -then shelled and sunk at Banka Island. Edgar Derbridge reached shore but was shot in stomach by Chinese bandits or looters and died in Muntok POW camp on 3.3.42. However, his grave at Muntok must have been overlooked or location lost because his remains were not reinterred, with other military remains from Muntok POW cemetery after the war, in the Dutch War Cemetery, Jakarta.
- **Stoker 1<sup>st</sup> Class Alan James Farr, #2041, RNZN** (Utiku, central North Island) – Killed in Action on 13.2.42, probably serving on 'HMS Scorpion' during the evacuation, when that vessel was bombed and sunk near Pulau Berhala in the Rhio Archipelago.
- **Tpy. Lt. Eric 'Stephen' Gerard, RNZNVR** (Christchurch and Wellington) – a Canterbury University student, Oxford University student, 'blue water' yachtsman, 'Evening Post' journalist and author of the book 'Strait of Adventure' he was Killed in Action serving on evacuation vessel 'SS Tandjong Pinang' after rescuing 230 women and children from Pulau Pom Pong (Rhio

Archipelago) when that vessel was sunk by shellfire from Japanese warship on 17.2.42, with almost total loss of life of those women and children aboard.

- **Ordinary Seaman (Radar) Alfred 'Alf' William Hanbury, # 3631, RNZN** (Glen Eden, Auckland) – recorded as killed on 16.2.42 during evacuation of Singapore.
- **Able Seaman Jack Thomas Mason Hayward, #3731, RNZN** (Wellington) – evacuated Singapore on 13.2.42 on RN Fairmile patrol boat 'HMML 310' which was attacked and beached on uninhabited Pulau Tjebia (near Banka Island) but died there after several weeks on 30.4.42. His remains were later reinterred in Kranji War Cemetery where he lies in Collective Grave 31, D 1 – 17.
- **HILL – Lt. 'E' F. Hill, RNR**, Chief Engineer is recorded as having been on an evacuation ship the "Tien Kwang" which had been sunk along with 'SS Kuala' at uninhabited Pom Pong Island, and it is recorded that he was then sent onto the rescue vessel 'SS Tanjong Pinang' to assist in the engine room of that ill-fated vessel - because the engineer was a man who had been his #2 on Royal Navy base "Laburnum" in Singapore. Lt F Hill, RNR is recorded by Captain Briggs of the "Tien Kwang" as being "... from New Zealand and Japan Constructional Engineers and also having been Chief Engineer to Moller's..." (a shipping line in Shanghai). [This researcher has not been able to identify Lt Hill, but this is not unusual because many citizens of countries who were internationally mobile disappeared without trace in WWII.]
- **Tpy. Lt. Geoffrey Daniell Inns, # 27638, RNZNVR** (Masterton) – a well-known Wellington yachtsman at the RPNYC, Geoff was an officer on the patrol boat 'Wo Kwang' on which he escaped from Singapore and at some stage reached Java, where the vessel left Tjilichap for Australia on 9.3.42 but was sunk by a Japanese destroyer the same day. Geoffrey Inns survived that attack and was in a lifeboat (which drifted for several weeks before beaching back on Java), but he died in the lifeboat on 13.3.42.
- **Able Seaman Henry 'Harry' John 'Jack' Kindred, W/3769, RNZNVR** (Torbay, Auckland) – Henry Kindred was serving aboard RN Fairmile patrol boat 'HMML 311' during the evacuation when it was intercepted, shelled and sunk by Japanese warships in the Banka Strait on 15.2.42 killing most of the crew and 57 Army personnel aboard, including Harry Kindred.
- **Able Seaman /Ordinary Seaman John Wilfred Leitch, # 3021, RNZN** (Newtown, Wellington) – escaped Singapore to Batavia by some unknown vessel, it is unclear but possibly aboard 'HMS Anking' from the port of Tanjong Priok. He was on that vessel after it again left Tjilichap in convoy with 'HMAS Yarra' and the tanker 'Francol' destined for Fremantle - John lost his life when 'HMS Anking' was attacked and sunk by a powerful Japanese group of warships on the morning of 4.3.42.
- **Lt. Colin Edward Macmillan, RNZNVR, MID** (Katikati/Thames/Wellington) – was in command of RN Fairmile Harbour Defence Launch 'HDML 1062' during its 'special operations work on the coast of Malaya after the Japanese invasion and when it participated in the evacuation of Singapore. On 16.2.42 'HDML 1062' had managed to reach the southern end of the Banka Strait with 45 crew and Army personnel aboard when it was intercepted by two powerful Japanese cruisers, shelled and sunk, killing over half the personnel on board including Colin Macmillan.
- **Acting Cook Thomas Marks, #3088, RNZN** (Roseneath, Wellington) – died on 16.2.42 whilst presumably serving on an unidentified vessel during the evacuation.
- **Lt. Arthur 'Peter' John Waller Martin, RNZNVR** (New Plymouth) - was in command of the auxiliary patrol vessel 'Pulo Soegi' during the evacuation of Singapore, carrying 80 crew and men of the RAOC being taken to Java to continue the war when during the night of 15/16.2.42 it was shelled by Japanese warships near Banka Island and sunk with great loss of life. It appears that Peter Martin and some 20 RAOC might have reached the beaches of Banka Island on the morning of 16.2.42 and joined survivors of the 'SS Vyner Brooke' only for them all to be captured and executed by the Japanese later that morning on Radji Beach – this was the same infamous massacre that saw the murder of 21 Australian Army Nursing Sisters by a Japanese Army unit on that beach.

- **Signalman Daniel Brendan McHugh, # 2397, RNZN** (St Heliers, Auckland) – a 19-year-old ex-Sacred Heart College pupil and Auckland Hospital employee, Daniel volunteered for enlistment in the NZ Navy despite being of Irish birth and having no formal requirement to serve. He had been temporarily attached to the Royal Navy shore base ‘HMS Sultan’ in Singapore when the Japanese invaded Singapore island, but in the chaos at that point the RNZN lost track of his whereabouts and tragically marked his service record as ‘Run’. Like most naval personnel in Singapore - who were not already allocated to a ship - Daniel Brendan McHugh had in fact been assigned at the last minute, as the fall of Singapore became imminent, to the crew of evacuation vessel ‘SS Tandjong Pinang’ which was commanded by RNZNVR officers. He was serving on that vessel when it was shelled at point blank range by a Japanese warship and sunk on 1.2.42, whilst carrying 230 women and children it had earlier that day rescued from being shipwrecked from ‘SS Kuala’ on uninhabited Pom Pong Island (in the Rhio Archipelago) during the evacuation. After the sinking Daniel McHugh reached a tiny raft and joined several nurses and another survivor and POW, Able Leading Seaman Robert Archer, RN., who later fortuitously noted down in a formal typed affidavit (before he too died in the Palembang POW camp) that New Zealander Signalman ‘McCue’ had been on the raft, with his foot almost completely blown off, but died after five days at sea from his wounds.
- **Temporary Sub-Lieutenant (E) James William Miller, RNR**, (Gisborne) was Engineering Officer on the evacuation vessel ‘SS Vyner Brooke’ when it was bombed, strafed and near Banka Island on 14.2.42, carrying several hundred women and children as passengers. Jimmy and some 80 other survivors made it to Radji Beach on Banka. Soon after most of the civilian women survivors and all children on the beach had proceeded on the morning of 16.2.42 on a trek through the jungle to walk to the nearest town (Muntok), a Japanese platoon arrived and summarily began to execute those eighty men and women (including 21 Australian Army Nursing Sisters) people on the beach. Tragically Jimmy Miller (plus Tempy. Lt. Bill Sedgeman, other unidentified naval and army officers and NCOs) formed the first group the Japanese troops ordered at bayonet point along Radji Beach, around the small headland and onto a beach beyond where they were ordered by the Japanese to walk to the water before they were murdered by bayonet, rifle, and sword.
- **Lt. Henry Alan Moray-Smith, RNZNVR** (Christchurch) was officially recorded as one of hundreds of naval personnel attached to Singapore shore base ‘HMS Sultan’. There is no confirmation of when or where he lost his life (there is an oblique, but which appears somewhat irrelevant, reference to ‘HMS Sylvia’ which was a launch but it would seem from research and analysis that he was very likely with his fellow New Zealander Lt ‘Peter’ Martin, RNZNVR, on the evacuation patrol vessel ‘Pulo Soegi’ when it was attacked and sunk and he made it ashore with Martin only to become another victim of the massacre by Japanese troops at Radji Beach on Banka Island on 16.2.42.
- **Tpy. Lt. Jack Neville, #29259, RNZNVR** (Lyttleton), like AB John Leitch, RNZN, left Singapore aboard an unknown vessel and reached firstly Batavia and then Tjilitchap where he boarded the auxiliary Royal Navy depot ship ‘HMS Anking’ before it formed the little ‘convoy’ with ‘HMAS Yarra’ and the tanker ‘Francol’. Jack Neville appears to have lost his life on 4.3.42 when the ‘HMS Anking’ was shelled and sunk by the powerful Japanese flotilla and a surviving crewman later mentioned that the Japanese machine-gunned survivors of ‘HMS Anking’ in the sea before leaving the scene.
- **CSM Harold Arthur Parsons, 2<sup>nd</sup> Selangor Bn., FMSVF**, (Ohope) was a Planter at Tanjong Malim and Manager Sungei Gumut estate, Selangor. He was wounded on 26.12.41, but somehow evacuated and reached Sumatra between 16-28 February 1942. He reached the port town of Padang and appears to have boarded the ‘SS Ban Ho Guan’ and lost his life (along with fellow New Zealanders Phil Goss, Charles Best and Alexander Clark-Walker) on 28.2.42 when that vessel was sunk near the Sunda Straits.

- **Probationary Writer Desmond Joseph Russell, # 2363, RNZN** (Waitara) was also aboard an unknown vessel out of Singapore and then later in the ill-fated convoy from Tjilitchap to Fremantle. An eyewitness to his death, (250 miles south of Java) who was alongside him in the sea and saw him killed on 4 .3.42 with many other survivors by machine gun fire from one of the Japanese warships, conveyed that horrific news to Desmond's family after the war.
- **Probationary Supply Assistant Eric Ebenezer Russell, #3100, RNZN** (Mornington, Dunedin) also escaped Singapore and reached Batavia where either there or at Tjilitchap he boarded the ex-merchantman auxiliary Naval depot ship 'HMS Anking' and died when it was sunk on 4.3.42.
- **Signalman Arthur Donald Scott, A/1521, RNZNVR** (Whangarei) – was serving on the evacuation vessel 'HMS Yin Ping', an ex-Yangtze River tugboat, when it was attacked by two powerful Japanese destroyers and sunk in the Banka Strait - probably killed on board, with almost 50 others, as the shells hit and smashed this small vessel on 15.2.42.
- **Lt. Basil Shaw, RNZNVR.** (Te Awanga in the Hawkes Bay) – was in command of the auxiliary vessel 'SS Tandjong Pinang' when it was making for Batavia with 230 women and children shipwrecked survivors on board from the earlier sinking of the 'SS Kuala' at Pom Pong Island (Rhio Archipelago). The modest sized (90 feet) vessel was attacked and shelled by a Japanese warship at point blank range - with women and children lining the decks in full view - and sank on the night of 16 .2.42, there were very few survivors. Lt Shaw had acted courageously trying to save his passengers in the sea before boarding a raft and then coming across a tiny, upturned pram dinghy from the ship. Together with a British rating and a Malay crew member, he rowed to Banka Island which he reached on 19 - 20.2.42. On 21.2.42 he and the British crew member were captured by Japanese soldiers and summarily executed near the town of Muntok. [ Post war search efforts in 1948 resulted in the remains of Lt. Shaw and A/S Young - together with the remnants of a scrap of paper with the name of crew members Baird, Hissey and Archer of the 'SS Tanjong Pinang' on it- being disinterred from an informal grave near Muntok lighthouse ( Graves Registration & Enquiries , Far East Land Forces 22.12.48), but unfortunately the Graves Party could not distinguish between the remains of the two men and as a result their bodies are now resting in one grave at Kranji Cemetery ( Plot 32, Row E, Grave 20) in Singapore with the inscription of them as an 'Unknown Allied Seaman'. Correspondence between the Graves Registration unit of Far East Land Forces and the Royal New Zealand Navy in 1949 explains that "... after thorough investigations, it would appear that a case would have existed for the marking of [the Kranji] grave as that of 'Lt B. Shaw RNZNVR and Unknown British seaman' but for the fact that was not possible to determine the number of persons from the remains..." so the Kranji grave was simply marked as 'Unknown Allied Seaman'.]
- **Tpy. Lt Phillip Wallace Smith, #29567, RNZNVR** (Mt Albert, Auckland) – was one of those who had been sent to Britain as a rating for Royal Navy training in 1940. He clearly showed aptitude because he was commissioned as a Tpy. Sub. Lt in October 1941 and posted to Singapore the following month as Liaison Officer (for Allied Dutch submarines) aboard 'HMS Anking'. After leaving Tjilitchap and the sinking of 'HMS Anking' by the powerful Japanese flotilla on 4.23.42 whilst on its way to Fremantle, Philip Smith was amongst those survivors in the lifeboat, one of his fellow officers later told his family that he had been wounded in the legs, but gave his place to someone else – some say he simply jumped overboard from the lifeboat to make room for another man and swam away from the lifeboat- as a result lost his life that day. In the early evening, a passing Dutch vessel picked up the survivors from *Anking*. The final entry on his posting record card states 'Death Presumed'. For his sacrifice and courage, Smith was awarded a posthumous Mention in Despatches.
- **Lt. Geoffrey Studholme, RNZNVR** (Christchurch) – Killed in Action whilst serving on the 90-foot evacuation vessel 'SS Tandjong Pinang' after it had rescued 230 women and children (survivors of the 'SS Kuala') who had been shipwrecked at uninhabited Pom Pong Island (in the Rhio

Archipelago), when their little vessel was sunk by shellfire from Japanese warship on 17.2.42 with almost total loss of life.

- **Assistant Cook Bruce Gunson Taylor, NZ 3039, RNZNVR** (Dunedin) – served on board the auxiliary vessel ‘HMS Changteh’ carrying RAF evacuees from Singapore when it was bombed and sunk east of Sumatra on 14.2.42. He survived that attack and sinking and with others in a lifeboat survived the very arduous lifeboat journey to Sumatra, made it across Sumatra, then from the port town of Padang to Tjilitchap in Java where he and others joined the old (1919 era) destroyer ‘HMS Stronghold’, but he was Killed in Action on 2 .3.42 when that ship was sunk by a Japanese taskforce south of Java whilst trying to reach Australia.
- **Tpy. Lt. John Pierce Upton, # 28166, RNZNVR** (Remuera, Auckland) – had served in Singapore commanding coastal craft since volunteering in late 1940 and was in command of the 60-foot ex Customs launch ‘Fanling’ at the evacuation of Singapore. He was carrying an evacuation party of 47 British and Indian Army personnel (including one Brigadier – General) when it was intercepted in the Banka Strait by a powerful Japanese taskforce, shelled and sunk on 16.2.42 with the loss of 43 men including John Upton.
- **Ordinary Seaman Colin Henry Wicks, #3075, RNZN** (Waltham, Christchurch) – attached at the time of the invasion of Singapore to shore base ‘HMS Sultan’, the official record is that he was ‘Missing Presumed Killed’ on or about 16.2.42 so we can only conjecture that he was aboard one of the evacuation vessels when he lost his life.

#### **New Zealand Civilians Killed during the Evacuation.**

- **Mrs Dorothy Ball (wife of Frank Ball) / Nurse Dorothy Kirker Ball, VAD.,** Chatsworth Military Hospital, Singapore ( Dunedin, maiden name McIntyre) – had evacuated with some six hundred women and children on ‘SS Kuala’ – including her sister Mrs Lucy Penseler - had survived the bombing and sinking of that ship at Pom Pong Island on 14.2.42 and reached shore where, along with her sister Mrs Lucy Penseler, she became one of 230 women and children survivors to then board the rescue vessel ‘SS Tandjong Pinang’ only to lose her life ( along with her sister) when that vessel was attacked by a Japanese warship and sunk on 17.2.42.
- **Charles Cairn Best** (Auckland) – Chief Surveyor, Malacca, Straits Settlement Government and Sub Lt, SSRNVR. Charles Best, as an experienced sailor who had cruised the waters south of Singapore many times, escaped Singapore on the yacht ‘Awan’ with four others before the Surrender, reached the Indragiri River on the east coast of Sumatra, crossed Sumatra to the port town of Padang. He boarded the ‘SS Ban Ho Guan’ with 103 Australian soldiers and other men from the Royal Navy and Malayan Volunteers on 27.2.42 headed for Tjilitchap on Java but the ship was sunk, apparently by a Japanese submarine, a day later near the Sunda Straits – very strangely because it was relatively close to land, with ‘no survivors.
- **Alexander McGregor Clark – Walker** (Whangarei) – Deputy Chief Surveyor, Perak Survey Dept, FMS., also another experienced sailor in Malaya and Singapore waters escaped Singapore on the yacht ‘Awan’ (with ‘Kiwis’ Charles Best and Phil Goss), reached Sumatra and later the port town of Padang and boarded the ‘SS Ban Ho Guan’ on 27.2.42 only to lose his life in the sinking a day later near the Sunda Straits.
- **Dr. Agnes ‘Nessie’ Beatrice Craig** – born 1905, as the twin of Florence (‘Fossie’) and one of the three highly qualified ‘Craig sisters’ from Wellington who had ventured to Malaya to work as professionals. Nessie worked for the Malayan Education Office having graduated BA and LLB from Victoria University of Wellington. She had boarded the evacuation ship ‘SS Kuala’ with her sisters Florence and Teresa, survived the bombing and sinking of that vessel at Pom Pong Island on 14.2.42, then boarded the rescue vessel ‘SS Tandjong Pinang’ with several hundred other women and children only to be killed when that small ship was attacked and sunk on 17.2.42 by a Japanese warship.

- **Dr. Florence Eileen Craig** – another of the three ‘Craig sisters’ she was born in 1905, the twin of Agnes (‘Nessie’). Florence was from Wellington but had graduated as a Doctor of Medicine (M.B, ChB, DPH, DTM, Otago Medical School in 1932 and travelled to Malaya to become ‘Lady Medical Officer’, Taiping. With both her sisters she evacuated on ‘SS Kuala’ but was seriously wounded in the bombing on 14.2.42 of the ‘SS Kuala’ at Pom Pong island - she appears to have suffered ‘Tummy blast’ from a bomb explosion which had left her paralysed, bleeding and her internal organs smashed. She was evacuated by launch from Pom Pong Island to the large island of Senejang in the Lingga Archipelago but died on 17.2.42 and was “... *buried on an island across the channel, Pulau Sebangka near its southern tip...*”. After the war it was not the policy or practice of the British or its Allies to disinter the graves of civilians for ‘concentration’ at permanent cemeteries like Kranji War Cemetery – but it appears that whilst disinterring the remains of an RAF serviceman from Sebangka in 1947, similar treatment was accorded Florence (perhaps because she was a doctor?). As a result – even though the CWGC do not seem to be aware of the fact – Florence Craig today lies in Kranji War Cemetery. Her grave is in Plot 27, Row B, Grave 14.
- **John Marshall Gamble** – John Gamble, born 1899, was from Auckland and had been a top student at Auckland Grammar School but by 1928 was in Malaya on an estate, then enlisting as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt in the SSVF in, but just prior to the war was in Batavia as an engineer with Cable & Wireless Ltd. He evacuated on the ‘SS Redang’ and lost his life when that vessel was shelled by the Japanese destroyer ‘Asagiri’ on 13.2.42 and sunk near the Berhala Straits, with the loss of half the 110 passengers and crew aboard.
- **Philip ‘Phil’ Henry Goss** – was from Maungatapere, Whangarei and a WW1 veteran of Gallipoli who arrived in Malaya in 1923 as a Land Surveyor and by the time of the Japanese invasion was the Chief Surveyor in Malaya and a Wing Commander in the Malayan Volunteer Air Force. He escaped on the yacht ‘Awan’ (with Kiwis Alexander McGregor -Clark and Charles Best) reached Sumatra and the port town of Padang, boarded the ‘SS Ban Ho Guan’ but lost his life along with all other 230 aboard when it was sunk near the Sunda Straits on 28.2.42.
- **Mrs. Clara Adelaide Morrison/Home - Morrison**, Govt Rest House, Seremban, Negri Sembilan, aged 57 years, wife of Douglas Home Morrison and mother of Dennis Home – Morrison was another injured in the bombing of “SS Kuala” and died 15.2.42 at Pom Pong Island. One reference says she drowned, but another recorded “... *Mrs. C. A. Morrison, of the Red Cross Singapore, was badly wounded on the Kuala and drifted away ...* “and yet another source suggests she was transported wounded to Sumatra because it states “... *Dr. Coates tried to identify the woman who died at Tembilihan hospital and was buried there. All he could say was that she had beautiful jade rings. He thought she might be Mrs. Morrison ...* “.
- **Mrs Lucy Penseler-** (wife of Wolf Penseler interned in Changi and Sime Road Camps) was from Auckland and was a Nursing Sister in the VAD at an emergency hospital in Singapore after the invasion of Malaya. She evacuated on the ‘SS Kuala’ - along with her sister Mrs Dorothy Ball - survived the bombing and sinking of that ship, made it to Pom Pong Island then boarded (again with her sister Dorothy Ball) the rescue vessel ‘SS Tandjong Pinang’ but lost her life when that vessel was shelled and sunk on 17.2.42.
- **Dr Theresa ‘Tessie’ Imelda Thompson, M.B., ChB. (nee Craig)** – born 1908 the third and youngest of the three ‘Craig sisters’ She was from Wellington and graduated as a Medical Doctor from Otago University Medical School in 1932. In 1937 was ‘Lady Medical Officer, Malayan Medical Service, Ipoh and the following year she married Francis Scott- of the North Hummock Rubber Company, Klang. With both her older sisters she evacuated on the ‘SS Kuala’, and although she survived the bombing and sinking of that vessel on 14.2.42 and made it to Pom Pong Island to board (with sister ‘Nessie’) the rescue vessel ‘SS Tandjong Pinang’, she also lost her life in the shelling and sinking of that vessel by a Japanese warship on 17.2.42. [Her father, Dr

George Craig, who had been Comptroller of Customs in New Zealand never recovered from news of the loss of his three daughters and died of a heart attack in 1947]

- **John Sydney Whittaker** – born 1884 (Dunedin) and a ships engineer in New Zealand in 1907, John Whittaker married Bessie Violet Sparrow also of Dunedin. By the 1930s he was an engineer and Manager of tin mining companies in Malaya. Just before the invasion he was Resident Manager of Petaling Tin Ltd., Selangor and he evacuated on 'SS Redang' but tragically lost his life in the shelling and sinking of that vessel on 13.2.42.

### **NZ Prisoners of War and Internees in Singapore.**

Ref **Appendix One**, again, and **Appendix Four** (being the list of New Zealand Civilians in Changi Prison and then Sime Road Internment Camp).

66 New Zealanders were imprisoned, firstly in Changi Prison Internment Camp and then from May 1944, when all internees were relocated to make space for POWs returning from the 'Burma Death Railway', in the Sime Road Internment Camp ( the site of the Camp, strangely, is still largely vacant land , covered with secondary jungle and a few scattered buildings and houses – the latter built on the foundation slabs used by the original 'women's camp hospital and the women's 'huts' and constructed for a pre-war RAF base. The site of Sime Road Internment Camp is the site bounded by Adam Road, Sime Road and the PIE, and can be partially entered via Adam Drive.

Four New Zealanders died as internees in Singapore- two following months of brutal 'medieval style' torture, starvation and beatings by the Japanese Kempetai during the war crimes known as the 'Double Tenth'.

- William GEORGE
- Keith Wilson MANNING
- Wolfram Hermann Albert PENSELER – tortured as a 'Double Tenth' victim.
- Hilary Cameron Russell RENDLE – tortured as a 'Double Tenth' victim.

### **NZ Evacuees who became POWs and Internees in Sumatra and Java**

See **APPENDIX TWO** and **APPENDIX THREE** for servicemen held as POWs in Sumatra and Java.

New Zealand Civilians held as internees in Sumatra and Java (an incomplete list) included.

- **Walter Scott Bagby** – a well-known jockey in NZ during the 1920s but achieved some notoriety before the courts (including a manslaughter charge from driving) and left NZ very soon after to ride in Bombay, Calcutta etc. before arriving in Malaya in 1930. By January 1931 he was 23 years of age and racing as a jockey in Penang and successfully competing in races throughout Malaya. At the time of Singapore's fall Bagby was aged 35 and boarded the auxiliary "HMS Giang Bee" to escape with other jockeys, including his friend Jimmy Martin. After the ship was sunk, he was captured at Banka Island and interned in several camps in southern Sumatra. Martin and Bagby discussed post war plans and reached an agreement that, if both survived, Martin was to take out a trainer's licence and Bagby was to ride as a stable jockey - so they returned to Malayan racing post war with a vengeance and during the next twenty years became one of the most successful jockeys and trainers in the country. During the 1950s Bagby's chequered past in front of courts reappeared in Malaya and he was frequently charged for offences such as speeding etc., but perhaps most telling is that in 1955 he was again prosecuted for killing someone whilst driving. By 1958 his health began to fail, and he had several heart attacks; he continued as a very

successful trainer but retired to NZ in 1966 and died there in Auckland in February 1967. He is buried at the Mangere Lawn Cemetery, South Auckland.

- **Sister (Miss) Hilda Mary Hobbs, Malay States Health Service.** (Auckland) evacuated on 'SS Mata Hari' and captured at Muntok on Banka Island, internee at Muntok / Palembang / Muntok /Belalau internment camps in Sumatra.
- **Mrs. Audrey Lenore Owen** (nee McRea) (Auckland) was very involved in YWCA organisational matters in New Zealand during the 1930s and arrived in Singapore as a single woman in 1937 to become the Secretary of the YWCA in Kuala Lumpur and then Singapore, prior to the war she married Mr S.F. Owen an engineer in the Public Works Department. In February 1942 she boarded the evacuation vessel 'HMS Giang Bee' with New Zealanders Leila Bridgeman and Eileen Higgs of the YWCA. Upon the sinking of the ship by shellfire from Japanese warships she was in a lifeboat for several days before reaching Banka Island. The lifeboat survivors lived in an empty house in a northern village on the island for ten days before being captured by the Japanese. She was described in the Sumatran internment camps (Muntok, Palembang, Muntok and Belalau) as "... tiny woman, just over five feet who was a hard-working volunteer whilst in internment camp...". She survived these horrendous internment camps and lived in Buckinghamshire after the War.
- **Sister (Mrs) Joan (Beatrice?) Powell (nee Hagen), Muar and Singapore Hospitals, Malayan Nursing Service.** (Westport/Whangarei/Auckland) wife of British journalist and AIF serviceman John Powell, captured on 'SS Mata Hari' at Muntok and an internee in Muntok/Palembang/Munto and Belalau Internment camps.

- **And including these six New Zealand civilians and servicemen who died in Sumatran POW or Internment camps.**

- **Gordon Burt, OBE.,** (Dunedin) **Lubrication Engineer, Asiatic Petroleum Co.,** Singapore. Evacuated as 'Chief Engineer' on 'SS Siang Wo' bombed and beached at Banka Island. Died 28.1.45 in Muntok Internment Camp, Banka Island. Remains still in Muntok, grave lost.
- **Michael Francis Enright** was born in 1880 in the Arrow District (Queenstown / Lake Whakatipu). He went to Malaya around 1903 - 1908 as initially as a gold dredging engineer on and enlisted as a Chief Motor Mechanic RNVR WW1. Later a Mining Engineer, Anglo- Oriental and was with the London Tin Company in 1942 as the Japanese invaded. Presumably, he was on one of the small evacuation ships sunk or captured in February 1942, since he was initially an internee in Muntok on Banka Island. He was later was moved as an internee to Palembang, **Sumatra**, but died in captivity 30.6.45 after the return to Muntok Internment camp, Banka Island. There is no CWGC record of his death.
- **Lt. Anthony 'Tony' Ruthven Clarke, RNZNVR** (Wellington) – a well-known 'blue water' sailor recruited under the 'Yachtsman's Scheme' he evacuated on – possibly - "Hung Jao" and 'HMS Dragonfly' (which was sunk at Pulau Posik east of Sumatra – captured at Banka Island and died after escaping from Muntok POW camp on 28.2.42, how he died is unknown and his body was never found.
- **Lt. Edgar Neil Derbridge, #29363. RNZNVR** (Havelock, Marlborough) – served on evacuation vessel 'HMS Li Wo' which was attacked, and in turn attacked, Japanese warships -then shelled and sunk at Banka Island. Edgar Derbridge reached shore but was shot in stomach by Chinese bandits or looters and died in Muntok POW camp on 3.3.42. However, his grave at Muntok must have been overlooked or location lost because his remains were not reinterred, with other military remains from Muntok POW cemetery after the war, in the Dutch War Cemetery, Jakarta.
- **Michael Francis Enright, Mining Engineer** (Queenstown), evacuated on an unknown vessel captured or sunk at Banka Island and became an internee in Muntok, then Palembang and back to Muntok where he died on 30.6.45 (there is no CWGC record of his death). His and other civilian internee graves were 'abandoned' by their respective countries after the war - so Michael Enright still lies under the ground at Muntok, and his grave is possibly built over with housing by now.

- **Sister Gladys Laura Hughes, VFX 61331, 2/13<sup>th</sup> Australian General Hospital, Australian Army Nursing Service, Singapore** (Waikino, near Thames). A nurse at Thames Hospital and St Helens Hospital, Auckland she had gone nursing in Australia in 1938 and enlisted whilst working in Melbourne. She survived the sinking of the 'SS Vyner Brooke' (many of the AANS Sisters from that ship were executed by the Japanese on Radji Beach, Banka Island a few days after the sinking) and became an internee in Muntok, then Palembang, Muntok again and then the horrifically deprived jungle internment camp at Belalau (southern Sumatra) where she finally succumbed to Malaria and Dysentery on 31.5.45. She is buried at Jakarta War cemetery.

### **NZ POWs transported to work as slave labourers on Burma /Siam and Sumatran 'death' Railways.**

The long list of New Zealanders who were 'Malayan Volunteers' and became POWs on the Siam/Burma Death railway is recorded on APPENDIX ONE. Other New Zealand servicemen who became POWs and ended up on that 'death railway' were.

- **Tpy. Lt James Clark, RNZNVR** (Invercargill) POW in Siam/Burma railway camps
- **Able Seaman Lawrence Charles Hurdell, # NZ3012, RNZN (Carterton)** - badly wounded after sinking of evacuation vessel 'HMS Grasshopper' he was captured at Rengat on Sumatra on 23.3.42. Taken to Medan in northern Sumatra he was made a slave labourer on the notoriously harsh Pekanbaru Railway, along with NZers Noel Beley and Guy McLeod.
- **Able Seaman Herbert Robert Oldnall, RNZNVR (Auckland)** – was on HMML 310 when it evacuated and was beached on uninhabited Tjebia Island. He and six others escaped there using a native 'prau' and reached Pulau Singkep but was captured and became a POW in Singapore and then a long series of camps on the Siam/Burma 'Death Railway'.

Including those who died as POWs in camps on the 'Siam/Burma Death railway' and the Sumatran 'Pekanbaru Death railway'.

- **2nd Lt. George Brockman, SSVF** (Wellington) Borneo & Co, Penang. POW who died Siam 23.2.43 of Dysentery.
- **Sgt. Alexander Burns, # 13464, FMSVF** (Hamilton), Mining Engineer, died of Beriberi on 1.9.43, whilst a POW being transported on a 'train' between POW camps on the Siam/Burma Railway.
- **Private George Sherwood Connor, #13470, 1/SSVF Bren Gun Platoon.** (Auckland) Insurance official, South British Insurance. POW, 'F' Force to Siam and died Tanbaya 'hospital' of tropical ulcers on 5.6.43.
- **Cpl. William Robert 'Bill' Davis, #7842, FMSVF**, (Granity, West Coast) Mining Engineer. POW transported to Brunei and died of Beriberi and Malaria on 1.4.45.
- **Cpl. Frank Noble Finlay, # 13189, Selangor Btn, FMSVF**, Asst. Planters Stores & Agency Co. Ltd. (Dunedin). POW on Siam/Burma railway camps **and** died of Cholera on 22.7.43.
- **CQMS Dennis Home- Morrison, #7027,3 FMSVF**, (Auckland). born 1907 Auckland. Husband of Clara. Manager Govt Rest Home, Seremban and the 'Si Rusa Inn', Port Dickson. POW Singapore to Siam. Died in captivity 30.8.43 at Bangem, Thailand of malnutrition & colitis. Jungle grave.
- **Able Seaman Edgar McLachlan / McLaughlin, #3038, RNZN** (Napier) – had been attached to shore base 'HMS Sultan' but boarded an unknown evacuation vessel and reached Sumatra, then the west coast port town of Padang where he was captured with hundreds of others when the

Japanese arrived on 17.3.42. He became part of what was called 'The Sumatra Battalion' of POWs and was transported to the awful Mergui camp in Siam to build an airfield, then moved to a series of camps as a slave labourer on the Siam /Burma 'death railway' and died in a 'hospital camp on 21.10.43. Edgar McLachlan is buried in grave B4.Z.6 in Thanbyuzayat Cemetery.

- **Stoker/Ordinary Seaman/ Able Seaman Ivan Pardoe, RNZN** (Manuteke, west of Gisborne) a miner before he enlisted. He was a crew member of 'HMS Dragonfly' when, after evacuating Singapore, it was bombed and sunk on 14.2.42 near Pulau Posik east of Sumatra. He made it to Padang on the west coast of Sumatra but was captured on 17.3.42 when the Japanese arrived and became a POW in northern Sumatra in the Medan and Belawan – Gloegoer camps loading ships, then building a long road near Takengon in Aceh province before finally being moved to work on the terrible 'Pekanbaru Death Railway'. Ivan succumbed to Typhoid fever at 'Camp 14a' on that railway ( he was buried in grave 12 beside 16 other graves of British and Dutch servicemen) and his final indignity was that when the Allied nations combed Malaya, Singapore and Indonesia after the war to disinter all servicemen and reinter them in formal cemeteries like Kranji, Kanchanaburi and the Jakarta War cemetery they 'overlooked' the cemetery at 'Camp 14 A' and **those 17 men (including Ivan Pardoe RNZN from Manuteke) still lie there forgotten amongst the undergrowth.**
- **Wireman Kenneth Charles Marinus Rasmussen, #2425, RNZN**, (20 Niccol Avenue, Narrow Neck, Devonport, Auckland). He enlisted in 1941 and after the evacuation from Singapore he somehow reached Sumatra by boat and across to Padang. He became a member of the POW "Sumatra Battalion" formed on 9 May 1942 of servicemen (20 Officers and 480 other ranks) after capture by the Japanese at Padang. The Battalion was transported on the 'England Maru' in May 1942 to Mergui in Thailand where they were put to work building an airfield - Mergui was a truly awful place for POWs. On 18 August 1942 the airfield was finished and the 'Battalion', along with the remaining Australians from "Ramsay Force" were transported on the 'Tatu Maru' to Tavoy. On 21 October 1942 they were again moved to Moulmein and then by road to Thanbyuzayat. These were the first POW working parties on the 'Death Railway' – their first camp was '18 kilo'. Ken Rasmussen died at '18 kilo' camp on the Burma Railway on 22.6.43 aged 23 years - the only member of the Sumatra Battalion to die at that location although the Battalion suffered some 140 deaths. The sad irony was that, almost five months later, the 'New Zealand Herald' of 12.11.43 reported that Ken's parents in Auckland had received word (presumably a Red Cross Postcard) from Ken that he was a "...POW in Moulmein, Burma and receiving 10 cents a day for his work...". It was not until a year later again that his death became known to his family. Ken Rasmussen is buried in grave A11.A.4 in Thanbyuzayat cemetery in Burma/Myanmar.
- **Pte. Leslie Russell, FMSVF** (Masterton). After teaching in Fiji, he was appointed to the Colonial Education Service in Malaya in 1939 and became a teacher at King Edward VII School. Captured he became a POW Singapore to Thailand with F Force. Died in captivity 5.6.43, aged 38 years, at Songkurai of cholera. Grave at Thanbyuzayat.
- **Sapper Leslie Ian Watt, Perak Btn, FMSVF (Ashburton)**. Studied at Otago School of Mines then a Mines Prospector working for J.B. David and Manager Temengor Tin Mining Limited, Temengor, near Grik, Upper Perak. POW Singapore to Thailand with F Force 28.4.43. Died in of Dysentery or Diarrhoea in captivity 26.8.43, aged 38 years, at Songkurai. Grave at Thanbyuzayat.

### **Release and repatriation in September 1945**

The release and repatriation of New Zealand POWs and Internees was efficiently and expeditiously managed compared to most countries – in fact it became a source of envy and admiration of POWs and Internees of other Allied nations. Reflecting the initiative shown by someone in New Zealand there is a 'unique' (nothing else seems to have been recorded by other Allied countries) piece of 'Weekly Newsreel film' – less than 10 minutes - that was shown to cinema audiences in New Zealand in 1945 of the release

and repatriation of NZ POWs and Internees in Singapore, Siam and Jakarta. It is in the New Zealand Sound Archives and the link is <https://www.nzonscreen.com/title/weekly-review-215-nz-cameraman-in-singapore-1945>.

This gives the viewer an insight into the POWs and Internees (although after they had received the benefit of nourishing good food again for a few weeks) and conditions in some of the 'better run' POW and Internment camps of Singapore and Java.

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## **APPENDICIES**

- **APPENDIX ONE** – List of New Zealanders enlisted in the 'Malayan Volunteers'.
- **APPENDIX TWO** – List of RNZNVR and RNZN men involved in Defence of Malaya and the Evacuation of Singapore.
- **APPENDIX THREE** – New Zealanders who were Killed in Action, during the Evacuation, or died as POWs or Internees.
- **APPENDIX FOUR** – New Zealanders who were internees in Changi Prison Internment Camp and then Sime Road Internment Camp